WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS,

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

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HEADQUARTERS
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SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT. FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY.

AMERICA'S IMPENDING COAL STRIKE

Washington, March 23--With the representatives of the United Mine Workers of America unable to reach a satisfactory agreement in the bituminous and anthracite fields, indications are that at the expiration of the present agreement, March 31, a general cessation of work will ensue. President Taft recently requested John Mitchell and a representative of the hard coal operators to meet in conference at the White House, but after the invitations were extended they were recalled and no conference is to take place at present. To sum up the entire matter it is probable that no agreement will be reached until a considerable time has elapsed after a general cessation of work. As near as can be determined, if work ceases, between 600,000 and 700,000 coal miners will be idle, although with such a general cessation of work this number may be largely increased by the miners in other and non-union fields ceasing work as a consequence of the general disaffection due to low wages, among the coal miners of the entire country.

GREAT BRITAIN'S COAL STRIKE

Washington, March 23--Cable dispatches announce that the great British coal strike has been practically settled by the representatives of the miners and the ministry agreeing to a bill to be enacted by Parliament which fixes the minimum wage at 5s per day for adults and 2s for boys under 18 years of age. The effect of the strike up to this point has been far-reaching, with 75 per cent of the workers in all lines idle, and for the great portion of this 75 per cent no assistance from any source has been forthcoming to care for their immediate necessities. Only three tin plate mills are in operation in the entire country and the cotton mills are practically closed together with all other industrial establishments. The announcement that the miners and the ministry have reached an agreement is hailed with acclaim by the people of England.

GERMAN AND FRENCH COAL STRIKE

Washington, March 23--Information comes to this country that the coal miners in Germany have decided to discontinue the coal strike, while a large number of coal miners in France have come out on strike. News of a definite character is difficult to obtain at this distance.

ANOTHER RETIREMENT BILL

Washington, March 23--Senator Cummins has introduced another pension plan for civil service employes following their retirement from active service. His bill recommends that all civil service employes, so far as pensions are concerned, shall be divided into two groups, the first including railway mail clerks, city letter carriers, rural letter carriers and mechanics, and the second all those employes not mentioned in the first group. Those named in group one are to be retired at the age of 65 years and those in group two at the age of 70 years. The bill also provides for deducting from the wages of employes an amount computed to be nearest one-tenth of a dollar that will be sufficient, with interest thereon at 4 , compounded annually, to accumulate for each employe at the age of retirement the amount of $5,000. This fund is to be invested by a board created for that purpose, and should any employe leave the service either through dismissal or resignation the sum paid into the fund will be returned.

ATTORNEY'S BITTER ARRAIGNMENT

Washington, March 23--In the arguments before the supreme court of the District of Columbia in the contempt case against the Federation officials, Assistant Attorney General Wilson made a startling assertion. He was discussing the attitude assumed by President Gompers, Vice-President Mitchell and Secretary Morrison in contending for their constitutional rights, in the face of the injunction issued by Justice Wright. In concluding the Assistant Attorney General said: "And when we further consider that there is rife in the land now, the theory that people may determine the eternal principles of right and justice for themselves, that it is not for the courts, but that it is finally for the voice of the people, speaking by the act of majority, to determine and say what are these eternal principles of right, these God-given principles of justice --taken in connection with all that is now in the air, with this dangerous heresay announced by these leaders of the people, sowing the seeds of rebellion, I submit to the court it is the solemn duty not only of the court but of everybody who is concerned with the administration of justice, to do everything in their power to immediately stamp it out and destroy it."

NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

Washington, March 23--The house immigration committee has appointed a sub-committee to frame a measure that will prove acceptable to the house. The chief stumbling block in the proposed legislation is over the regulations proposed to test the illiteracy of incoming aliens. This will be the chief problem to be considered by the sub-committee.

STEEL WORKERS ON STRIKE

London, March 23--About 1,200 steel workers have struck at Sheffield. The cause of the trouble is that some of the contractors for gunshields for the admiralty have placed some of the work with coremakers who are paid 35s a week, and the moulders, claiming the work, are receiving 42s per week.

LIVING EXPENSES COMPARED

Washington, March 23--In a cable dispatch from London it is stated that G. H. Knibbs, statistician of the Australian government, has prepared an article dealing with the cost of living in Australia and other countries. While it is difficult to secure accurate data on this subject in a worldwide investigation, yet, it is claimed that the facts secured are approximately correct. The summary is favorable to Australia, in that it shows that the cost of living in that country is cheaper than in most parts of Europe. In a comparison with Germany, the United States and Australia it is shown that in the average Australian household, when housing, fuel, food, lighting and clothing are provided for, 40.82 per cent of the family income is available for other expenditure, as against 36.76 per cent in Germany and 25.41 per cent in the United States. This margin is designated as "the margin of comfort."

DON'T LIKE REPORT

Washington, March 23--Since the issuance of the report on women and child labor in the cotton mills, the North Carolinian delegation in congress has been severely criticising the department of commerce and labor. It will be remembered that when the report first came out Senator Overman made an effort looking toward another investigation, but for some reason abandoned the idea. The commissioner of the Bureau of Labor maintains that he can produce conclusive evidence that the statements contained in the report are in strict accord with the conditions prevailing in the cotton mills in the territory covered by the investigation. The report is a severe indictment and the members from North Carolina evidently feel keenly in the matter.

INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION HEARING

Washington, March 23--A hearing has been had on the industrial commission bill before the house labor committee. This bill was introduced as a result of a recommendation by President Taft. The purpose of the commission is to investigate and report to congress concerning hygiene sanitation in factories, wages in force in various parts of the country, the effect of long hours of labor upon male, female and child labor; investigation of dangerous machinery where large numbers of employes work, and all other information bearing upon the industrial life of the United States. The life of the commission is limited to two years.

HEARINGS ON COMPENSATION BILL

Washington, March 23--Numerous protests have been received against the provisions of the employers' liability and workmen's compensation bill There have been sub-committees appointed from the senate and house judiciary committees to look after the measure and conduct hearings, the two sub-committees to sit together. As has been noted heretofore, extended hearings were held prior to the introduction of the bill, but now the subject in the concrete will be gone into thoroughly before recommendations are made by the house and senate committees.

Firemen working for the Gas and Electric company in Lynn, Mass., have secured a reduction in hours from twelve to eight.

MAINTENANCE OF WAY MEN GET SETTLEMENT

Washington, March 23--President A. B. Lowe of the International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes, has been successful, through the minister of railways at Ottawa, Ont., in having reinstated members of the organization referred to who were dismissed for "alleged political partisanship". The minister of railways took prompt action on the representation made to him, giving assurance that where there occurs suspension or dismissal of employes in the future an investigation will be inaugurated, and if it is proven that the employe is not guilty of the offense charged he will be reinstated and paid for lost time.

BATTLESHIPS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Washington, March 23--The battleships Oklahoma and Nevada, for the construction of which contracts were recently let by the navy department, have made their first appearance on the monthly progress report issued by the bureau of construction. Two of the battleships on the report are nearing completion; the Wyoming is 93.5 per cent and the Arkansas is 90.9 per cent complete. The New York and Texas are respectively 26.8 and 56.1 per cent complete.

STEEL COACHES PREVENT FATALITIES

Washington, March 23--In commenting on the wreck of the Twentieth Century Limited on the New York Central at Poughkeepsie, railroad men assert that steel coaches have been the means of avoiding a terrible loss of life. In six of the eleven accidents of this year on the road mentioned not a life was lost. In practically all, the elements were present that, except where steel cars were used, would have made heavy fatalities probable.

NEW STREET CAR ORGANIZATION

Toledo, March 23--After about 17 years of non-unionism, a charter has been issued to the employes of the Toledo Traction company by the Amalgamated Association. The company has bitterly fought the organization of its men and Rezin Orr, the treasurer of the Amalgamated Association, was badly beaten up by thugs employed by the Traction Company, while forming the organization. It is stated that the organization is now in a fair way to protect the interests of the employes.

DESERTION BILL REPORTED FAVORABLY

Washington, March 23.--Senator Nelson's bill, abolishing the penalty of imprisonment for desertion of seamen from vessels of the United States and also for refusal to join the vessel, has been ordered favorably reported from the senate committee on commerce.

GLASS WORKERS GET RAISE

Pittsburg, March 23--Five thousand hand window glass workmen employed in factories throughout Kansas, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia have secured an increase in wages averaging 35%, all branches of the industry being affected.

GAS WORKERS WIN

London, March 23-- The gas workers employed by the Stockport corporation, numbering about 500, have won their battle for an advance in wages and a fixed minimum of 25s in certain departments. Owing to the strike about 20,000 other people were thrown out of employment. This is the third municipal strike which has taken place recently, all having been satisfactorily adjusted.

ANOTHER AMALGAMATION

London, March 23--The members of the Liverpool Shipwrights' society have just voted in favor of affiliation with the Boilermakers' and Iron and Steel Ship Builders' society, and the members of the latter body will vote at the April monthly meeting as to whether they will accept the Liverpoll society. The voting in April will not commit the members of the latter organization beyond a vote in favor of amalgamation, but will empower the executive officers to devise a practical scheme of amalgamation.

TO CELEBRATE LABOR DAY

London, March 23--May day, this year, is to be declared a general labor holiday, although it falls upon a week day. It is to be made the occasion of the greatest labor demonstration ever seen in this country. Hitherto the principal May day celebrations have been held on the first Sunday in May. In South Wales 250,000 workers will stop work on May 1st, to attend the demonstrations. The greatest meetings in the country will be held in Cardiff, Liverpool, New Castle and Dundee.

LONDON WAITERS' UNION

London, March 23--The National Union of Waiters is pursuing a vigorous campaign of organization. This is a young organization, but the results so far achieved have been so gratifying that steps are now being taken to extend the organization into the provinces. Organization work is being carried on in New Castle, Gloucester, Liverpool, Bristol, Sheltonham and Bath.

THE WORKERS' DEATH ROLL

London, March 23--Approximately 1,182 fatal accidents occurred in the factories and workshops of the United Kingdom last year, 24 of the victims being women. There were 102 more fatalities than in the previous year, dispite the Board on Trade regulations. There were 140,735 workers injured, which is an increase of 19,561 over the year 1910.

GAS WORKERS GROWING

London, March 23.--The membership of the Gas Workers Union is still increasing, and the finances are on the upward grade. During the quarter ending December 30, 1911, the branch income was $61,000 and the total expenditures $12,500.

DEATHS BY TRESPASS

Washington, March 23.--It is claimed by the officials of the Pennsylvania railroad that 8,523 trespassers have been killed by that road since January 1, 1900. It is stated also that in the same time 8,285 people were injured. In a report just issued by the road it is asserted that the company is waging a vigorous war on trespassing, the management having posted its right of way with signs, warning people against using railroad tracks as thoroughfares.

AGAINST REFERENDUM

Washington, March 23--Former United States Senator Joseph B. Foraker recently addressed the constitutional convention in session at Columbus, Ohio. He advised the convention against the making of initiative, referendum and recall a part of the organic law of the state. It appears that practically all lawyers are not in favor of permitting the people to pass judgment upon the acts of public officials or endorse or disapprove legislative enactments.

RAILROADS ASK FOR TIME

Washington, March 23--Representatives of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers met recently with the representatives of the Eastern Railroads to discuss the demands for increased wages. After a conference it was decided to adjourn until March 25, at the request of the railroads. The question of increased wages was not gone into to any extent, the railroads announcing that they desired further time to consider the matter before making a definite reply.

HATTERS' CASE TO BE RETRIED

Washington, March 23.--The famous Hatters Union case will be retried in Hartford, Conn., at the coming May term. Judge James P. Platt has asked to be relieved from presiding at the coming trial, probably on account of the fact that the higher court reversed his decision in a former trial of this case. Judge Lacombe, senior presiding judge, has designated Judge James L. Martin of Vermont to sit in the retrial of the case.

CHANGE IN LEGIEN ITINERARY

Washington, March 23--A slight change has been made necessary, owing to arrangements which were overlooked at the time of compiling the schedule for Carl Legien's speaking tour in this country. The change assigns Mr. Legien at Milwaukee for Friday night, May 3, instead of Saturday, and the Chicago meeting will be held on Sunday afternoon May 5.

TO INCREASE SALARIES

Manchester, Eng., March 23--Increases in salaries to the total amount of $15,000 are to be recommended for approval at the next meeting of the Manchester City Council, this increase applying to all departments.

Carpenters at Norwood, Mass., have secured the 44-hour week.

"FELLOW SERVANT LAW ESTABLISHED"

Washington, March 23--The supreme court has decided that employes in the car repairing department of a railroad are fellow servants of employes in the operating department, thereby relieving the employing railroad from liability for injuries to the former class by the latter. "The doctrine of fellow servants is established," said Justice Holmes, "whatever may be thought of it." The Justice, however, added that it was for congress to change the law if it so desired.

SEEKS CITIZENSHIP

Washington, March 23--Santiago Iglesias, general organizer of the American Federation of Labor in Porto Rico, and representing a large number of unions having headquarters on the island, is in Washington endeavoring to hasten the passage of the bill giving citizenship to the inhabitants of Porto Rico. The measure has already passed the house and is now under consideration by the senate committee on Pacific islands and Porto Rico.

PERE MARQUETTE SETTLEMENT

Washington, March 23--An arbitration board appointed under the industrial disputes and investigation act of Canada has just given an award in favor of the members of the International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes as against the Pere Marquette and its officials. The act under which the settlement was made is compulsory, and this is the sixth or seventh time that it has been invoked by the organization referred to.

PAINTERS WIN OUT

Spokane, Wash., March 23--An attempt was recently made by the contracting painters of this city to force a wage reduction. The painters, however, met the proposition with a flat refusal and made preparations to put up a stubborn fight. As a result most of the master painters have receded from their former stand and have agreed with the union that the old scale of wages in effect last year shall continue.

CONTEMPT CASE CLOSED

Washington, March 23--The testimony in the contempt case is all in and the arguments have been concluded. The arraignment of President Gompers, Vice-President Mitchell and Secretary Morrison by the attorneys for the court was bitter and vindictive. It is anticipated, although there is no means of learning definitely, that the decision will be handed down within thirty days.

MACHINISTS STRIKE SETTLED

Hamilton, Ont., March 23--The machinists and helpers of Fort William struck at the Canada Iron Foundry for an increase of 5¢ per hour. After being out about ten days the strike was settled on a satisfactory basis.

Keep everlastingly at it and organize. Never give up.

ILLITERACY IN UNITED STATES

Washington, March 23—A preliminary statement of the results of the thirteenth census enumeration regarding illiteracy in the United States has just been made public by the bureau of census. The statement shows that in 1910 there were 71,586,270 persons ten years of age or over in the United States, of whom 5,517,608 were unable to read or write, constituting 7.7 per cent of the population. The native whites, who constitute nearly 75% of the entire population, had the smallest number of illiterates, 1,535,580, or 3 per cent; the foreign born whites had 1,165,519 illiterates, or 12.8 per cent; the colored had 2,331,559 illiterates, or 30.5 per cent. The gain in population from 1900 to 1910 was 13,640,456, but the number of illiterates fell off 638,461. There was consequently a decline in the percentage of illiterates from 10.7 to 7.7 per cent for the aggregate population.

EXPLOSION RESULT OF INCOMPETENCY

Washington, March 23--The press dispatches recently carried the news that the boiler of a locomotive in the Southern Pacific railroad yards at San Antonio, Texas, had blown up and killed 25 workmen. This is one of the effects of employing men who are unfamiliar with railroad requirements and are incompetent. There is a strike on the railroad mentioned, and it has employed men without regard to their qualifications to take the places of the strikers. It is stated that many of these men are totally ignorant of the workings of an engine, and it is asserted that the engine which blew up and caused the catastrophe had not only not had proper care, but that cold water had been injected into the boiler at a time when the water in the flues was extremely low, thus causing an explosion.

READING AND WRITING TEST

Washington, March 23--Senator Simmons is advocating a reading and writing test for immigrants as an amendment to the Dillingham immigration bill. The senator asserted that the opposition to this test came chiefly from the steamship and railroad companies and interests which seek cheaper labor than the American standard of living will allow, and ascribing the recent strike in Lawrence, Mass., as a result of our immigration laws the manifacturers taking advantage of the ignorance of foreign workmen by paying a starvation wage.

SWITCHMAN MADE SPEAKER

Washington, March 23--Samuel S. Bradner, a switchman in the Southern Pacific yards at Benson, Arizona, has been elected speaker of the house of Arizona's first legislature by the Democrats. It is also stated that the legislature will enact a constitutional amendment reinserting the recall of the judiciary, this feature having been striken from the constitution as originally adopted by the influence brought to bear by President Taft.

CHAINMAKERS GET INCREASE

London, March 23—An advance in wages of 10% has been granted to the chainmakers in the South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire districts.

SEEKING TO EXCLUDE WOMEN

Washington, March 23--The Iron Moulders' Union is endeavoring to have a law passed by the Massachusetts state legislature forbidding the employment of women in foundries. Two or three large establishments are now employing women in their coreerooms, the most of whom are Polish. The officials of the Iron Moulders maintain that the work carried on in iron foundries is not work in which women should be employed. The Metal Manufacturers' Association is, of course, opposed to the bill and has been endeavoring to impress the committee before which it is being considered with the fact that labor in iron foundries is of a suitable character for women, and endeavoring in every way to have the bill killed.

SELLING JOBS TO GIRLS

Holyoke, Mass., March 23--A practice has been uncovered in this city whereby working girls have been made victims. Recently the fact was revealed that in the mills of the Farr Alpaca company foremen have been in the habit of selling jobs to girls. In one instance it is reported that $10 was taken from a young women and she was promised the first vacancy in a certain department. Evidently the foreman got mixed and gave another young lady, whom he had made a previous promise to, the vacancy which occurred. The other girl, incensed at the treatment, went to the superintendent, and as a consequence the foreman was discharged. It is stated that this practice has been common.

LABOR'S MEMORIAL DAY

Washington, March 23--Reports are coming into headquarters that Labor's Memorial day, the fourth Sunday in May, will be observed to a greater extent this year than ever before. Heretofore the second Sunday in May has been officially designated Memorial day, but by a resolution adopted at the Atlanta convention of the American Federation of Labor it was changed to the fourth Sunday in May. The custom of observing Labor's Memorial day is generally recognized in the glass industry, and the day is generally observed also by the Iron and Steel workers and the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters.

WANT MORE PAY

Boston, March 23.--A convertion of delegates representing every department of car construction and repair on the New Haven railroad, met recently in this city. After a discussion of the wages paid to the men it was concluded to ask for a flat increase of 3¢ per hour. The increase, if secured, will affect about 15,000 men.

GRAND TRUNK REDUCES WAGES

Washington, March 23--It is reported from Toronto, Ont., that the Grand Trunk has reduced the wages of practically all trainmen in its employ in the Dominion. The cut in wages ranges from ten to twenty-five per cent.

RAILROAD WRECKS

Washington, March 23--Railroad wrecks recently reported are as follows: Seventy-two passengers injured on Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul road near Oakwood, Wis., due to spreading rails. Two passengers injured on New York, New Haven and Hartford near Branford, Conn. Twelve passengers injured - five seriously - on Georgia Southern and Florida near Tifton, Ga. Engineer and fireman on New York Central near Belfontaine, O., were seriously injured by collision with a freight train. A score of passengers on the Atlantic Coastline near Wilmington, N. C., injured in a headon collision. Two employes on the Louisville and Nashville at Mobile, Ala., probably fatally injured in collision. Five persons killed and eleven injured on Canadian Pacific train in collision between Ottawa and Hull, Ont. Engineer, fireman and six people seriously injured on Pennslyvania system at Greencastle, Ind., account collision. Two killed and 33 passengers seriously injured on Chicago Great Western train near Dunkerton, Iowa, train being derailed. Three dead, 5 missing and a score or more injured as the result of a rear-end collision on the Santa Fe at McCartneys, New Mexico, on account of a collision.

LAWRENCE STRIKE PRACTICALLY ENDED

Washington, March 23--It is stated that the wage increases upon which the striking textile workers returned to work in the Lawrence mills will aggregate $10,000,000 per year, if increase is granted on all New England factories. From the latest information some of the mills have not yet agreed to the general increase, but it is predicted that it is only a matter of a short time until all of the mills in New England will be paying practically the same scale.

BARRE, MASS., STRIKE

Washington, March 23--The strike of the 750 operatives against the Barre Woolcombing company mills is still on and the situation is intense. A similar condition prevails in Barre as did in the strike at Lawrence, Mass. Conferences have been held between the mill officials and a committee representing the strikers, but nothing so far has been accomplished toward a settlement.

TERRIBLE DISASTER

Washington, March 23--News has been received that 105 coal miners have perished in a mine accident at McCurtain, Okla., the entire day shift, consisting of 116 men were on duty, and only 11 escaped, the others being entombed and probably are dead on account of gas and fire.

PAINTERS SECURE INCREASE

Hamilton, Ont., March 23--The members of the Painters union here have secured an increase of 2½¢ per hour. Negotiations have been on for some time and an amicable agreement was reached through the Master House Painters' Association.

Carpenters at Middleboro, Mass., recently secured the forty-four hour week and increase in wages without strike.